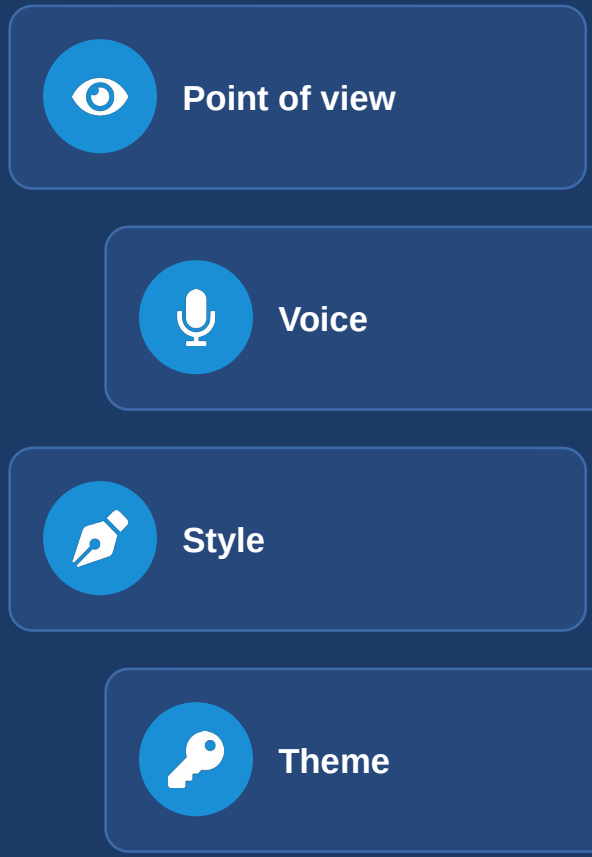
NBE3U Stories Now, Lesson 4

Who Is Telling This?

Narrative voice and control of the story



Today's goals

We are learning…

- To analyse narrative voice and point of view.
- How style develops a novel's themes.

I can…

- Identify the point of view and narrator in my novel.
- Explain what the narrator knows and doesn't know.
- Analyse how one stylistic choice develops a theme.
- Support my analysis with quotations.

Today's plan

Time	What we're doing	You will…
0–10 min	**Warm-up**	Compare
10–25 min	**Point of view**	Note
25–50 min	**Voice map**	Analyse
50–68 min	**Style and theme**	Write
68–75 min	**Reflect**	Write

Speaking back, 1893

“There was no such time as that before our marriage, for we are not married now. Stop,” she said, outstretching her palms against him as he sprang to his feet, “I tell you we are not married. Why should I recognize the rites of your nation when you do not acknowledge the rites of mine? […]

E. Pauline Johnson (Tekahionwake), “A Red Girl's Reasoning” (1893), The Moccasin Maker (1913). Public domain.

Think about it

Who is speaking, and to whom?

Who narrates the story around her?

How would the story change if Christine narrated it?



Big idea

In Unit 2 we saw Indigenous people described from outside. In contemporary novels by First Nations, Métis and Inuit writers, the narrator's voice is a choice: whose eyes we see through, what they know, and what they keep back. Voice is where a writer takes control of the story.

Point of view toolkit

Type	Signal	Effect
First person	“I”	Intimacy; limited knowledge; possible unreliability
Close third	“she,” one mind	Inside one character, with a little distance
Omniscient	Many minds	A wide view of a community
Multiple narrators	Chapters by character	Many perspectives; readers assemble the truth

Key terms

narrator	The voice that tells the story. *Not the same as the author.*
reliable	We trust what the narrator reports. *Unreliable narrators may be young, hurt or hiding something.*
style	How it's written: sentences, words, tone. *Humour, silence, Indigenous-language words.*

Map the voice

In circles, on page 1:

1. Identify narrator and point of view.
2. What does the narrator know, and not know or say?
3. Is the narrator reliable?
4. How would another character tell it?

Outside and inside



Outside (Unit 2)

- A settler narrator describes Indigenous people.
- They rarely speak.
- Their thoughts are guessed.



Inside (now)

- A First Nations, Métis or Inuit narrator.
- Thoughts, humour, anger, love.
- The community seen from within.

Who controls the narrative changes what readers can know.

Style choices to watch

Humour

Relief, resistance, belonging.

Indigenous-language words

Untranslated or explained? Why?

Dialogue

Who talks, who listens, who is silent?

Sentence length

Speed, panic, calm.

Time shifts

Memory and present side by side.

Setting details

Land as character.

Model analysis paragraph

Task: How does a stylistic choice build a theme? (Model on the 1893 historical text.)

Johnson gives Christine the story's sharpest questions. When she asks why she should “recognize the rites of your nation when you do not acknowledge the rites of mine,” the repetition of “rites” puts the two nations' laws on the same level. The question, not an answer, ends the argument, and the story's theme of equal sovereignty is carried by her voice rather than the narrator's.

Why it works

Names the choice (repetition, a question).

Short, exact quotation.

Explains how it builds the theme.

Write your paragraph

On page 2:

1. Choose one stylistic choice.
2. Quote an example with the page.
3. Explain how it develops a theme.
4. Link back to the novel's big question.

Questions about voice

- Whose thoughts can we hear?
- Who is talked about but never speaks?
- When does the voice change: speed, humour, silence?
- What would an outsider narrator have missed?

Check yourself

Be honest. This helps you choose what to work on next.

Success criteria	Not yet	Almost	Got it
I can identify the point of view and narrator in my novel.			
I can explain what the narrator knows and doesn't know.			
I can analyse how one stylistic choice develops a theme.			
I can support my analysis with quotations.			

Exit ticket

1. Your novel's point of view.

2. One thing the narrator doesn't know or say.

3. One style choice and its theme.

Next class: Poems Now.

Teacher reveal

Voice: key points

Point of view: First person (I), close third (she, filtered through one mind), omniscient, or multiple narrators.

Knowledge: Narrators know only what they see; gaps create suspense, irony and sympathy.

Control: When a First Nations, Métis or Inuit character narrates, readers see the community from inside; this reverses the outside gaze of Unit 2.

Style: Sentence length, humour, Indigenous-language words, dialogue and silence all carry meaning.

Theme: Link one stylistic choice to one theme: for example, short, broken sentences during a crisis show fear and loss of control.